

William Colman Accounts

1802-1822

1 volume

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Merchant and shoemaker from the Byfield Parish of Newbury, Massachusetts and Boscawen, New Hampshire. Includes accounts of the prices paid for shoemaking and agricultural labor, accounts of the men and women who worked for his father's shoe store and factory, notes of who lived in the younger Colman's home, a page mentioning his move to New Hampshire, and accounts of agricultural produce sales and exchange of farm labor.

Background on William Colman

William Colman (ca. 1780-1820) was the son of the enterprising Deacon Benjamin Colman of Byfield Parish in the Essex County town of Newbury. The elder Colman, who was involved in a controversy with the parish pastor over the issue of slavery in 1780 leading to Colman's suspension from the church, was the owner of a store and shoe factory which William Colman helped

manage.

Scope of collection

As was typical in Essex County in the early 19th century, a good deal of the trade of local merchants like Colman was in shoes. The accounts reflect the prices paid for shoemaking and work of various sorts, including agricultural labor (some of which was unspecified). Colman himself may have been a shoemaker, as his accounts included making and repairing shoes and boots for others. However, he may have just served as the middleman in those accounts, for after he left Newbury in 1815, shoemaking does not appear in any of his transactions.

The pages toward the front of the account book detail the work accounts of a number of men and women who worked for the Colmans between 1803 and 1815.

According to notes made on the last page of the book, William Colman married Zerviah in 1809. However, boarders, laborers and possibly relatives augmented his household. In 1810, his household consisted of twelve people and included five children, three male adults and four female adults. Zerviah died some time before 1816, the year when William remarried.

In the middle of the account book, there is a loose page mentioning Colman's move to Boscawen, New Hampshire in 1815. Thereafter, the accounts change character. The merchant-shoemaker transactions cease and are replaced by accounts more typically associated with a rural economy. Sales of agricultural produce and the exchange of such labor as sawing wood, fixing wagons, loaning oxen, painting, carting, and plowing dominate the second half of the account book. Sometime in 1820, William Colman probably died, since by early 1821 accounts were being settled by Hannah Colman, William's second wife.

Administrative information

Provenance

Additional Information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Cite as: William Colman Accounts (MS 212). Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts Amherst Libraries.

Provenance

Acquired from Charles Apfelbaum, 1987.

Processing Information

Processed by Ken Fones-Wolf, 2003.

Language:

English

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Search terms

Subjects

Agricultural wages--New Hampshire--History--19th century--Sources.

Boscawen (N.H. : Town)--Economic conditions--19th century--Sources.

Boscawen (N.H. : Town)--Rural conditions--19th century--Sources.

Colman, William, 1768-1820.

Households--Massachusetts--Newbury--History--19th century--Sources.

Merchants--Massachusetts--Newbury--History--19th century--Sources.

Newbury (Mass.)--Economic conditions--19th century--Sources.

Shoemakers--Massachusetts--Newbury--History--19th century--Sources.

Shoes--Prices--Massachusetts--History--19th century--Sources.

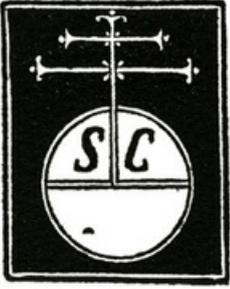
Contributors

Colman, William [main entry]

Genres and formats

Account books.

Inventories.



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